
ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

THE ANARCHIST LABOR MOVEMENT

BUILDING A FREE COMMUNITY

Whether you live in a City, town, or country, working people deserve fair compensation for their labor. Every person who looks for work should be able to find it. Every worker and student should be entitled to food, housing and good health. It is possible for no one to have to live in poverty, be exploited, or be discriminated against.

People prosper best in a society with political AND economic freedom. This means worker self-management in the workplace and direct democracy [self-management] in the community.

Working class communities today are a form of colonialism where absentee capitalist landlords own everything and use the occupation forces of their cops [and sometimes the military], courts and jails to terrorize people into submission while they squeeze as much money out of people as possible through taxes, rents, redlining [discrimination, underserving, overpricing], etc..

SOLIDARITY

As the capitalist society dismantles their so-called “welfare state”, they want to kick you out in the cold once they are finished exploiting you. Their police harass and imprison the poor and needy so they can be made slaves of the state [e.g., “community service” and prison labor]. You should have the right to live and let live, but the cost of living is rising and wages and work hours are often a part time economy where people have to work more than one job to survive. We all need someone to back us up to liberate ourselves from the fear of living paycheck-to-paycheck. We need to organize mutual aid groups with our friends and family. We need to get to know our neighbors and co-workers, so, we can help each other when we have problems.

We need to organize workers associations to help people without unions or workplace protection. They can find sympathetic lawyers for legal aid. They can also organize group kitchens for people who need nutritious meals to go to school or work. They can organize medical care for sick and injured people without insurance [including women’s health and family planning]. They can help gang members and ex-cons find work so they don’t have to sell addictive drugs or steal to survive. They can organize confidential treatment, peer counseling and conflict resolution for people with substance abuse, addiction or mental health problems. Some organize community centers when they can find free rent and avoid government harassment.

RENT CONTROL

Rent was invented by the first rich man to steal land from a poor man and force him to pay to use his own land. The rich made free land scarce to force people to live in cities so they could be exploited as cheap factory labor by capitalists who made poverty a crime and imprisoned debtors. Prisoners were forced into the military or sold as slaves to colonial landlords.

To keep rents high, affordable rental housing is still kept scarce for working class people who can’t afford high rents. New housing is built for the rich and affordable housing is converted to housing for the rich. The Welfare State is demolishing its public housing projects and reducing housing subsidies to the poor. Cuts in welfare income made an entire class of resident hotels no longer affordable and forced their former residents to become homeless. Slum housing used by the poor is frequently overcrowded and rarely prosecuted.

A minimum wage job will no longer pay rent. People take on roommates or sleep in cars, vans, or camper trucks [which are at risk of being stolen by the cops if not parked at a residence]. Some pay exorbitant rents at motels [with a roommate—because no security deposit is required], but can’t live more than a month at a time without being forced to move out by law.

Working class people with affordable housing need to organize to protect it, to have slum conditions repaired,

and to demand more affordable housing construction and RENT CONTROL. They need to organize against gentrification and condominium conversion. Renters unions now provide free legal aid to renters and take direct action to resist gentrification and evictions of poor families. Anarcho-Syndicalists are also involved with cleaning and repairing dilapidated and slum housing to make it safe, sanitary and habitable again. This requires vigilance because greedy developers may try to steal buildings after we make them vibrant again.

FREE SCHOOL

To get an education [before the first public school], a boy was forced to sell himself into slavery. Girls weren't educated. They were the property of their fathers 'till they married. Abandoned [divorce was illegal] or widowed wives were often forced to become thieves and prostitutes to survive. Anarcho-Syndicalist women from Mujeres Libres ["Free Women"] taught Spanish women and farm workers to read when it was illegal.

The first public school was created to homogenize culture and discourage foreign cultural influences and ideas. The FREE SCHOOL is the opposite of the indoctrination school many of us attended. It is a place of curiosity, exploration and learning; not a way to control kids. Education should be organized to enable everyone to develop their natural aptitudes, regardless of their condition of birth or social situation [class]. FREE SCHOOL means free school supplies, books, meals, medicine, tutors, and clothes for school students. Many Anarchists are teachers, librarians or booksellers. FREE SCHOOLS can be organized anywhere.

Community Colleges, technical schools, and some universities, teach classes that give you workplace job skills. Some workers associations have apprenticeship programs. Workers are able to train themselves in the skills and working knowledge needed to manage their workplaces themselves; without a need for bosses.

DUEL POWER

We cannot have a fair economy until we cast off the machine politicians, corruption and racist institutions that protect and preserve the status quo. We need a system loyal to the well-being of the community and not some faceless corporation(s) [who service the rich]. Existing neighborhood councils have no power because the system always protects the power elites. This is power we must take by declaring ourselves autonomous [self-managed] and abolishing state power in favor of democratically accountable local public safety.

We can begin to take control of our lives by creating DUEL POWER institutions that serve the community and "COPWATCHing" [policing the police] so cops live in the community they serve and be accountable to elected civilian review boards; and, to the same standards which make murder, theft, and extortion criminal for the rest of us. Direct action in our community is more effective than political action [lobbying and electioneering]. DUEL POWER means fixing problems ourselves without begging to the government. It means resisting the corruption of the system by helping each other [mutual aid]. It means undermining the power of the State.

COUNTER-ECONOMICS

In the absence of social control of wealth, we have some control over our own income(s). After capitalists exploit us by profiting from our labor, they add insult to injury through redlining. We should be able to loan our savings as mutual aid to improve our own community. Instead, the money goes to real estate speculation, the stock market, and even banks who discriminate against people in your neighborhood based on race and class. Credit unions pretend to be democratic, but they aren't unless they serve only the communities where they are located.

We also need to fight exploitation by usury [interest]; especially, consumer credit: credit cards, loan sharks, check cashing/payday advance, etc. are designed to exploit people who are discriminated against by banks. The best way to fight exploitation is to do away with poverty. Until that day, we need to remember that there was a time before the post WWII "consumer society" when people helped their neighbors and friends; when we weren't tricked into thinking that we were competing with each other. We can help each other get over on the system and live cheaper.

We also need to demand the right of workers to take over and run businesses/workplaces which are abandoned or bankrupted by their owners. This include the right of tenants to takeover and refurbish slum housing [esp. abandoned housing] for their own use. No more "land banking". We can also set up our own workshops to provide services. If we have skills we can also exchange services [skill exchange]. We can pool our resources. We can also volunteer. COUNTER-ECONOMICS is about finding ways to live better while denying more of your money [capital] to the capitalist system and their government [their police state].